

SUMMARY & FAQs

Over the past several years Lakewood has been engaged in a long-range Facilities Master Plan to close unneeded schools and realign and rebuild the remaining schools: elementary, middle and high school. This plan is approved by the State as part of a process of co-funding schools in dire need of repair or replacement.

OVERVIEW OF LAKEWOOD SCHOOLS' FACILITY PLAN

What is the purpose of the April 2, 2009, Community Forum?

To determine how much value the community places on keeping seven elementary schools in operation, and, if it is deemed to be more cost effective to close an elementary building, to provide the Board of Education with a prioritized list of criteria to determine which two schools to renovate/rebuild and which elementary building to close.

Who decides about whether or not to fund and build two or three more elementary schools?

The Lakewood Board of Education makes the final decisions on issues regarding the operation and funding of the public schools within the City of Lakewood.

What happened in Phases I & II?

- Three middle schools were consolidated into two new buildings.
- Two new elementary schools were built
- Two middle schools were renovated as elementary schools
- The west side of Lakewood High School will be totally renovated as of August 2009

What is Phase III?

The renovation of two or three remaining elementary schools & completion of the east side of Lakewood High School

Which schools are included in the Phase III construction?

The east half of the high school needs to be rebuilt and renovated. Additionally, the plan calls for a decision to retain our seven elementary school configuration or reduce the number of elementary schools to six. The schools left to consider are Grant, Lincoln and Roosevelt.

MONEY ISSUES

How much money is the State of Ohio providing to finish the Lakewood Schools Facilities Master Plan?

\$46.8 million (adjusted for inflation from initial estimates)

When will the State of Ohio give the Lakewood City Schools this money?

There is a State timeline that the School Treasurer and the School Board monitor closely. The bond issue will be placed on the ballot at about the time we become eligible on the list of school funding projects. Once the community votes YES on its final portion of the facilities project, the State sets up its system for distributing the funds to the Lakewood Board of Education.

What is the contingency plan if the Phase III bond issue fails?

Phase III needs to happen. If it fails, we will continue to operate with what we have and put it back on the ballot again. If Phase III fails, many of our students will be expected to learn in inferior facilities. If we don't pass our bond issue in a timely manner, we risk jeopardizing our

state funding, which was what created this opportunity for us in 2003. Without Phase III our facilities problem becomes worse.

Hasn't the public already funded the construction work at the high school?

The high school reconstruction plan has always been divided into two parts. At the beginning of the next school year (2009-2010) the science, art, and career-technical spaces at LHS will be open. Alternative education spaces will be completed as well, although these will be used as "swing spaces" for regular education until the east half of the building is completed in Phase III. The east half of LHS will include all of the language arts, foreign language, math, social studies, etc., rooms, plus a new tryout theater and main gym.

Can we use the buildings as they are?

In 2004 the community decided that there was a high value in having buildings that are equitable in design and programming. An unfinished plan would leave 35% of our elementary students in school buildings that do not support comparable community and learning environments. In addition, only half of the high school would be renovated leaving the oldest and largest portion of the building untouched and inadequate.

What are the fixed operating costs of an elementary school building?

Costs include the building principal, school secretary, head custodian, assistant custodian, media assistant, utilities (water/sewer, natural gas, electricity), custodial cleaning supplies, maintenance supplies, building repair services. (Approximately \$400,000 – \$620,000 per year)

What is the difference between a bond issue and an operating levy?

Let's use the analogy of your home. A bond issue is like your mortgage. Bond issues fund the purchase and construction of whole facilities.

Operating costs are like your family budget. This covers the costs of daily life in schools – employee salaries, textbooks and other supplies, utility bills, regular maintenance of buildings, etc.

These two sources of funds may not be mixed.

What is a permanent improvement levy?

A permanent improvement levy is a request for taxpayers to set up a separate fund to provide funding for on-going maintenance and long-term repairs of school facilities. The State requires communities receiving co-funding from it to guarantee the upkeep of any new facilities. The State requires a ½ mill permanent improvement levy. In Lakewood, in today's dollars, this translates into \$15.31 per year per \$100,000 of home value.

Where does the money come from to fund the operation of six or seven elementary schools?

The Lakewood City Schools' operating budget for 2008-2009 is \$68.5 million per year. Approximately 39% of this comes from the State of Ohio funding formula that is calculated on the number of students attending our public school buildings. The federal government provides some money in the form of grants for services for specifically identified populations within our community. Some grant-funded programs also operate within the various school buildings. The rest of the revenue comes from local property taxes.

It is the responsibility of the Lakewood Board of Education to allocate these funds for educational programming (including salaries) and the daily operation of facilities.

So, how much money are we talking about for Phase III?

The total estimated project cost for the Lakewood Facilities Master Plan approved by the State is \$195 million.

Total estimated for Facilities Master Plan Phases I and II (complete in August 2009)		\$195 million
		120 million
Phase III		
Renovate two remaining elementary schools	30 million	
Complete east side of Lakewood High School	45 million	
Total Phase III cost		75 million
State co-funded share		<u>(47 million)</u>
REMAINING LAKEWOOD COST		\$ 28 million
Renovate third remaining elementary school (optional)		15 million
REMAINING LAKEWOOD COST		\$ 43 million

RIGHT-SIZED SCHOOL FACILITIES

What was the status of our school buildings in 2002 at the beginning of this process?

Lakewood was operating 10 elementary schools, three middle schools, and the high school. All of the buildings were functionally out of date and in serious need of renovations or demolition. Elementary building enrollments ranged from less than 200 students to more than 450 students.

What goes into defining building capacity?

Building capacity is an architectural term for best use of a facility based on what it is supposed to be happening within the building. So, capacity in a school building includes number of classrooms, amount of small group instruction space, size of multi-purpose rooms, and ability to reconfigure existing spaces while maintaining a constant student:teacher ratio.

Why do the Lakewood numbers vary from State numbers regarding building capacity?

Lakewood Schools' internal review of building capacity includes spaces set aside for pre-school and multi-use rooms, while the State information does not. With respect to the new buildings, Lakewood has built more space than was needed according to State standards, to allow for fluctuations in enrollment and programming.

I have heard some of our schools are overcrowded today, so what are the actual class sizes?

Lakewood strives to maintain a 24:1 student: teacher ratio in regular education classrooms.

When a school building closes, what happens to the teachers?

Teachers are assigned to classes based on the student: teacher ratio. Teachers teach where the students are. Lakewood's current average student: teacher ratio is 24:1.

How accurate are the population projections?

Enrollment projections are made using a variety of sociological and statistical processes. However, factors such as birth rates, community development, State educational requirement changes and non-public school attendance affect enrollments. The State and Lakewood Schools update enrollment projections periodically to account for changes in such factors.

Will open enrollment continue to be available to Lakewood residents?

The State of Ohio requires that all school districts develop and implement an open-enrollment policy between school buildings within its borders.

LIFE UNDER PHASE III

How long will Phase III construction take?

Approximately two years from the first day of construction.

Will open enrollment continue to be available to Lakewood residents?

The State of Ohio requires that all school districts develop and implement an open-enrollment policy between school buildings within its borders.

Will elementary schools be redistricted after Phase III is complete?

Yes. And periodically the Board of Education will continue to re-examine elementary and middle school boundaries in order to provide the effective delivery of educational programs and best use of facilities.

How much would a non-public school closing in the area affect student population, and would our schools be able to handle this influx?

At this time, this is an unknown variable. The newly rebuilt and renovated schools could possibly accommodate such contingencies with additions to the buildings of two to four classrooms.

What is going to happen to the decommissioned elementary buildings?

Nothing yet. Some of the empty buildings will be used as swing space during Phase III construction.

Who will decide what is done with the decommissioned school buildings?

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the Board of Education to decide what to do with vacant, Board-owned property. It has been said that a community committee will be formed in the next 3-5 years to study this issue and make recommendations to the Board at that time.

When will the public be invited to tour the high school construction site?

Public tours will take place in August before the first day of classes.

When Grant, Lincoln and Roosevelt are closed for renovation or rebuilding, where will these children go to school?

Once a decision is made about whether or not two or three elementary schools will undergo construction in Phase III, community members will be invited to provide input about transition issues. The administration will explore possibilities and then implement the safest possible transition plan that enables teachers and staff to continue to provide effective teaching and learning opportunities during transition years.

What will happen to the modular units at the high school during Phase III?

We will continue to need the modular units for swing space during construction of the second and larger portion of the high school.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

What is the status of the CHAMPS school-age program at Grant?

The CHAMPS program, or Children Achieving Maximum Potential & Success, is a program for children with severe disabilities. It will become part of the Horace Mann community in fall 2009. There are approximately 45 students in this program.

Why is busing not included in any of the discussions?

Busing is not an option as Lakewood's current funding structure could not handle such a fundamental change at this time.

Are any school buildings closing at the end of this school year?

No. In the 2009-2010 school year, the Lakewood Board of Education will operate one high school that is half reconstructed, two middle schools, and seven elementary schools.